

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-14 ISO-00 DHA-02 CIAE-00 DODE-00
PM-05 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02
PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-05 /102 W
-----002623 291942Z /44

P R 291316Z JUL 77
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6630
INFO AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY
AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 12539

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PINT, PDEV, SF, RH
SUBJECT: BOTHA INTERVIEW IN LONDON "TIMES"

REFERENCE: PRETORIA 3742

1. FOLLOWING IS FULL TEXT OF BOTHA INTERVIEW IN "TIMES"
BY CORRESPONDENT NICHOLAS ASHFORD, DATELINED PRETORIA.
JULY 27, AND PUBLISHED IN JULY 28 EDITION OF "TIMES".

2. BEGIN TEXT: IT MUST NOW BE ACCEPTED THAT THERE CAN
NO LONGER BE A COMPLETELY PEACEFUL SOLUTION TO THE
RHODESIAN PROBLEM, MR. R. F. BOTHA, THE SOUTH AFRICAN
FOREIGN MINISTER, SAID TODAY.
HE TOLD ME IN AN INTERVIEW THAT IN ANY RHODESIAN
SETTLEMENT THERE WOULD BE LOSERS "AND THOSE LOSERS WILL
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KEEP ON FIGHTING FOR A WHILE." BUT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT
THERE WOULD EVENTUALLY BE A SLACKENING OF THE CONFLICT
AND THAT A RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD BEEN DULY
ELECTED BY THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION WOULD GAIN
INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.
MR. BOTHA, WHO WAS SPEAKING IN HIS PRETORIA HOME
WHERE HE IS RECOVERING FROM A BOUT OF INFLUENZA, MADE IT

CLEAR THAT HE EXPECTED THE "LOSERS" TO BE THE PATRIOTIC FRONT LED BY MR. JOSHUA NKOMO AND MR. ROBERT MUGABE. HE CRITICIZED THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT FOR "TRYING TO LEAN OVER BACKWARDS TO PLEASE THE MEN WITH THE GUNS." BRITAIN, HE SAID, MUST DECIDE WHETHER IT WANTED TO SEE A SOLUTION BASED ON THE TRADITIONAL BRITISH PRINCIPLES OF FREE AND OPEN ELECTIONS, OR WHETHER IT WAS MERELY SEEKING A MECHANISM TO PLACATE THE MEN WITH THE GUNS. "I SAY TO YOU THAT YOU WILL NOT PLACATE THEM, AND NO ONE WILL. THAT IS NOT THE WAY TO BRING PEACE TO RHODESIA."

IN MR. BOTHA'S VIEW, BRITAIN AND THE UNITED STATES HAD TWO ALTERNATIVES IN TRYING TO ACHIEVE A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA.

EITHER THERE SHOULD BE AN ELECTION AMONG THE COUNTRY' FIVE MILLION BLACKS TO CHOOSE A LEADER TO NEGOTIATE AN INDEPENDENCE CONSTITUTION WITH THE ELECTED LEADERS OF THE 250,000 WHITES, OR ELSE BRITAIN ITSELF SHOULD DRAFT A CONSTITUTION WHICH WOULD THEN BE IMPOSED ON RHODESIA, AS HAD HAPPENED IN OTHER FORMER BRITISH TERRITORIES IN AFRICA.

MR. BOTHA SAID THE BIGGEST SINGLE OBSTACLE TO A SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA WAS THE ABSENCE OF A SINGLE IDENTIFIABLE GROUP WHICH COULD SHOW IT HAD THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE BLACKS.

"WHAT IS WRONG WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THE BLACKS
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SHOULD FIRST OF ALL DECIDE AMONG THEMSELVES WHO IS THEIR INDISPUTABLE LEADER? THE WHITE AND BLACK LEADERS COULD THEN MEET ROUND A CONFERENCE TABLE AND COME TO AN AGREEMENT VERY QUICKLY. BUT NO, THIS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE BECAUSE THERE ARE GROUPS WHO DO NOT WANT TO COME TO POWER THROUGH THE BALLOT BOX BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY WOULD NOT WIN."

AS BRITAIN CLAIMED SOVEREIGNTY OVER RHODESIA, HE WENT ON, IT HAD THE RIGHT TO DRAW UP A NEW CONSTITUTION FOR THE COUNTRY. SUCH A CONSTITUTION SHOULD BE FAIR, ENSURE MAJORITY RULE AND PROTECT MINORITY RIGHTS.

MR. BOTHA, WHO WAS SOUTH AFRICA'S AMBASSADOR TO WASHINGTON AND REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS UNTIL HE TOOK OVER HIS PRESENT POST EARLIER THIS YEAR, HAS BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN THE RHODESIAN NEGOTIATIONS AND WAS ONE OF THE PRIME MOVERS BEHIND THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN INITIATIVE UNDERTAKEN BY DR. KISSINGER.

HE IS OF THE OPINION THAT BRITAIN, THE UNITED STATES AND THE BLACK "FRONTLINE" STATES HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FAILURE TO REACH A PEACEFUL SOLUTION, RATHER THAN MR. IAN SMITH, THE RHODESIAN LEADER.

LAST MONTH MR. BOTHA CARRIED A MESSAGE FROM MR.

SMITH TO MR. VANCE, THE PRESENT SECRETARY OF STATE,
DURING A VISIT MR. BOTHA MADE TO WASHINGTON. IN IT,
MR. SMITH INFORMED THE AMERICAN GOVERNMENT THAT HE WAS

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STILL PREPARED TO ACCEPT MAJORITY RULE, THAT IT WOULD
TAKE PLACE WITHIN TWO YEARS OR WHATEVER SHORTER PERIOD
COULD BE AGREED UPON AND THAT THE PROCESS LEADING
TOWARDS MAJORITY RULE WOULD BE IRREVOCABLE. BUT NOW THE
AMERICANS AND BRITISH DID NOT SEEM PREPARED TO PUT MR.
SMITH'S PLEDGE TO THE TEST.
MR. BOTHA ALSO REACTED STRONGLY TO WESTERN CRITICISM
THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAD FAILED TO EXERT SUFFICIENT PRESSURE
ON THE RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT TO REACH A POLITICAL SETTLE-
MENT. EARLIER THIS WEEK DR. DAVID OWEN, THE BRITISH
FOREIGN SECRETARY, SAID THAT THE VIOLENCE WHICH WAS NOW
THREATENING TO ENGULF SOUTHERN AFRICA WOULD NOT HAVE
TAKEN PLACE WITHOUT SOUTH AFRICA'S SUPPORT.
MR. BOTHA REJECTED THIS CHARGE. SOUTH AFRICA'S

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RECORD IN TRYING TO BRING THE VARIOUS PARTIES TOGETHER
IN RHODESIA SPOKE FOR ITSELF, HE SAID. SOUTH AFRICA'S
ROLE WAS NOT TO INTERFERE IN RHODESIA AND DICTATE
SOLUTIONS BUT TO USE ITS GOOD OFFICES SO THAT THE
VARIOUS PARTIES COULD DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN A CALM
ATMOSPHERE.

"YOU SAY THAT SOUTH AFRICA HOLDS THE KEY TO THE
SOLUTION, BUT WHEN MR. VORSTER TRIES TO PLAY A CON-
STRUCTIVE ROLE YOU GO AND KNOCK US OVER THE HEAD. THERE
WERE TIMES DURING THE PAST 18 MONTHS WHEN AGREEMENT WAS
ALMOST REACHED, BUT EACH TIME THEY FAILED THERE WERE
PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY AMERICA AND BRITAIN SAYING THAT
WE WERE TO BLAME." END TEXT

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